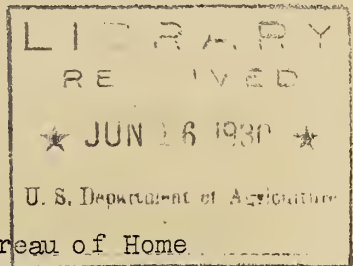


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UNITED STATES GRADES OF MEAT AND WHAT
THEY MEAN TO THE HOMEMAKER.



A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics and W. C. Davis, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered through Station WRC and 35 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Friday, May 23, 1930.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

A few mornings ago I was out shopping for a beefsteak to serve to some extra special company we were having at our house that day. As I stood waiting my turn in the meat market, I looked through the glass door of the cooler. On one of the large cuts of beef, I saw something that caught my eye at once. On this beef was stamped "U. S. good steer," "U. S. good steer," the same words over and over again all the way across the cut. For a second I was puzzled, then I realized that this must be the Government graded beef I'd heard about but hadn't seen on sale in my meat market before. I bought my steak of U. S. good steer." Of course it isn't becoming for a hostess to boast, but everybody at dinner that evening praised the steak. When I announced it was U. S. graded beef, they looked curious and asked more questions than I could answer. Nobody can stump Mr. Davis, though, on questions about Government meat grading. He has been working on it for fourteen years. So tell us, Mr. Davis, what should I or any other homemaker understand when we see "U. S. good steer" stamped in purple ink like a ribbon across a piece of beef?

MR. DAVIS:

"U. S. good steer" Miss Van Deman, is a quality term. You were following the right lead when you bought your steak from a Government graded piece of beef. The Government puts the grade stamp on the meat to help you. It means just what it says. You can buy your steaks or roasts with better assurance that you are getting what you want.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Are there any other grades of beef, Mr. Davis, except "U. S. good steer?"

MR. DAVIS:

Yes, there are six other grades of beef: U. S. prime which is the highest quality, followed in order of excellence by U. S. Choice, U. S. Good, U. S. Medium, U. S. Common, U. S. Cutter, and U. S. Low Cutter. U. S. Choice, Good or Medium are good enough for most of us.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Before every one of these grades, I notice you say U. S., meaning United States, I suppose. Is there other graded beef on the market?

MR. DAVIS:

A few meat packers place private trade marks on beef and other meats. None of these use the initials "U. S." and each one grades according to his own private standards.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

I think I understand now, Mr. Davis, about these quality grades. They are an entirely different thing, aren't they, from the little round purple stamp that we have seen for many years on all kinds of meats offered for sale?

MR. DAVIS:

Yes, they are entirely different. The round purple stamp has nothing to do with quality. It is Uncle Sam's guarantee that the animal was healthy and its meat is wholesome.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

How did the Government work out these meat grades, Mr. Davis? What points do you grade beef on?

MR. DAVIS:

Fatness is one of the main things. It's queer, but lots of people, when they go into the meat market to buy beef, want a lot of lean and just as little fat as possible. Now good beef doesn't grow that way. There must be enough fat to make the beef tender and juicy. The fat on good beef usually is white or slightly creamy and small particles of fat are distributed through the lean. This is called marbling. You just can't have nice tender beef unless it shows some fat.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Now that you put it that way, Mr. Davis, I can see that a lean steak with a narrow rim of butter-colored fat would be just as poor a buy as a skinny blue-fleshed chicken. White or cream-colored fat, and plenty of it, I'm going to look for when I buy beef next time. Tell me another point of importance in the eyes of you meat judges.

MR. DAVIS:

General contour of the carcass also denotes quality in beef. Other things being equal, blocky compact carcasses grade high. A rib roast, for instance, of high quality is thick and full. It has a high percentage of meat to bone. There is less waste. The eye is large and generously marbled. It is nicely covered with firm white fat.

On the butcher's block such meat cuts smoothly and evenly and its texture is firm. Cut surfaces remain nice and smooth, they hold together and the rich red color of the lean is in striking contrast to the firm white fat. Such beef is one of nature's delicious morsels. When it bears Uncle Sam's grade stamp you need not hesitate to buy

MISS VAN DEMAN:

There's no doubt, Mr. Davis, that this grading is a help to the woman who wants to get just what she pays for in the meat market. It means, doesn't it, that wherever you see meat stamped with these U. S. grades, that meat has been judged and marked according to the very same standards? If I were buying "U. S. good steer" in Kansas City, or Portland, Oregon, or Boston, Mass., or New York City, I'd be getting just the same quality, wouldn't I? That is, of course, so far as it is humanly possible for judges to tell without actually eating the meat.

MR. DAVIS:

Yes, Miss Van Deman, U. S. Government grades for beef are the same the country over. What is choice in Portland, Oregon, is choice in Portland, Maine. That is one of the great advantages to the consumer. Before long graded and stamped lamb and other Government graded meats may be had in retail stores everywhere. Last Thanksgiving and again at Christmas U. S. graded turkeys came onto the market. Turkey growers as well as turkey buyers liked the grading system.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

If any one would like to know more about U. S. grades of beef, just write to Mr. W. C. Davis, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington. You can tell he doesn't mind questions.

Now that Mr. Davis has told us what kind of beef to buy, the next thing of course is how to cook it. For when it comes to good beef on the table, there is almost as much in cooking as in grade. Do you have the leaflet, "Cooking Beef According to the Cut?" It gives recipes and directions for steaks and roasts from the tender and less tender cuts. Just write to the Bureau of Home Economics, Department of Agriculture here in Washington, and we'll send you the beef leaflet free.

